

MOLECULAR APPROACHES FOR THE CHARACTERISATION OF GHANAIAN AVOCADO PEAR (*PERSEA AMERICANA* MILL.) GERMPLASM.

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In forested regions of southern Ghana many edible forms of avocado pear exist, but offer different fruit and fruiting quality characteristics. This is the result of unregulated seed-based propagation, use of volunteer seedlings as planting materials by farmers and germplasm introductions from a variety of sources, including the USA by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It is believed that West Indian, Mexican and Guatemalan races of avocado all co-exist in Ghana.

To date, no studies have been undertaken to characterise those races or their hybrids in Ghana. Some of the key determining morphological characteristics for those ecological races are outlined here.

Research currently being carried out at the University of Nottingham, UK is investigating the use of molecular markers (AFLPs) to characterise and delineate the avocado pear germplasm currently grown in Ghana.